



# Fair Housing Advocate

Summer 2010

Volume 3, Issue 1

A PROJECT OF COORDINATED STATEWIDE HOUSING SERVICES FOR  
THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

**Housing discrimination is against the law. In Vermont, it is illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental or financing of housing because of a person's membership in a protected category. The Fair Housing Project works to eradicate housing discrimination in Vermont through outreach, education, and enforcement of Fair Housing Laws.**

#### Protected Categories

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Disability
- Age
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Receipt of Public Assistance
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity

## Fair Housing Project Produces Materials in Several Languages

The FHP has brochures and information sheets available in Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Bosnian, Russian, Burmese, Kirundi, Somali, and Swahili. The FHP will soon partner with Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program to expand this list to include translations of the Fair Housing for Families Handbook in Nepali and Arabic, as well as other languages.

In March of 2010 the FHP, in collaboration with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) and Channel 17, produced several short videos on basic fair housing information in the following languages: Kirundi, Swahili, French, Arabic, Nepali, Somali, and Maay Maay. These 11 minutes videos air on Channel 17. All of the videos can be viewed online at the fol-

lowing link: <http://www.cctv.org/tags/fair-housing-project>. The air times for each video are also listed on this website.

Copies of our written materials are available free of charge. Copies can be requested by calling 802-864-3334 x 202, emailing [fhp@cvoeo.org](mailto:fhp@cvoeo.org), or stopping by our office between 9am and 4pm on Monday through Friday.

## HUD Addresses Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination

Will Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity become federally protected categories under the Fair Housing Act? Things certainly seem to be moving in that direction. Vermont and many other states and municipalities already include one or both of these categories in state law or local ordinance.

In June of 2009, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan signed a non-discrimination policy

memorandum for the agency and created a HUD Diversity Council. He also echoed President Obama in calling for the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act and the extension of benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

At the end of February 2010, HUD announced its first ever study of housing discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. HUD sought input on the best

way to conduct this study from people in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. HUD is still currently seeking online public comment on the design of this study.

In a press release on June 7, 2010, HUD announced that for the first time in its history it will require grant applicants seeking HUD funding to comply with local and state anti-discrimination laws that protect lesbian, gay, bi-

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Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail please contact our office at the above number. This newsletter is made possible by a grant from the US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development.



## Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Continued...

sexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals. Secretary Donovan said, "We're using every avenue to shut the door against discrimination." The Department also intends to propose new regulations that will clarify the definition of "family" to ensure its housing programs are available to all families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

More news was made on the first of July as HUD issued a new policy that

would treat most gender identity discrimination as gender discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

21 states and the District of Columbia have laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, and 14 states and the District of Columbia that have laws that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.

Do you have questions about your tenant rights and responsibilities?

Contact **Vermont Tenants**  
**802-864-0099**

### Removing Barriers to Strengthen Communities: Affordable Housing and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing at the Local Level

This workshop will explain the relationship between fair housing law and land use regulations. Tools will be provided to help municipalities avoid violating federal and state fair housing laws.

All municipalities receiving community development grants from the Vermont Community Development Program must complete a Fair Housing Training as a condition of funding. Any municipality dealing with issues such as affordable housing, group homes, residential care facilities, requests for accessibility modifications, or seeking VCDP funding, cannot afford to miss this workshop.

**October 7, 2010 1-4pm**

St. Johnsbury, VT

**November 4, 2010 1-4pm**

Rutland, VT

**February 3, 2011 5:30-8pm**

Burlington, VT

Free and open to the public

To register call Dani Fuoco at the CVOEO FHP 802-864-3334 x 109 or email [dfuoco@cvoeo.org](mailto:dfuoco@cvoeo.org).

## FAIR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT

### Vermont Human Rights Commission

1-800-416-2010

1-802-828-2480 (voice/TDD)

### Vermont Legal Aid

1-800-889-2047

### HUD Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity

1-800-827-5005

1-617-565-5453 (TTY)

[www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing)

